

Subject: [Fwd: Draft Comments on STIP]

From: Eric Taylor <eric\_taylor@dot.state.ak.us>

Date: Fri, 30 Dec 2005 11:23:57 -0900

To: Carol A Taylor <carol\_taylor@dot.state.ak.us>

CC: Susan K Woodrow <susan\_woodrow@dot.state.ak.us>, Debbi A Howard <debbi\_howard@dot.state.ak.us>

Carol--

Here's the preliminary input from Patrick Reinhart, representing Alaska Mobility Coalition. Note he intends to send the letter (adjusted for input from members) tomorrow.

Eric

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Subject: Draft Comments on STIP

From: Patrick Reinhart <preinhart.silc@pci.net>

Date: Thu, 29 Dec 2005 16:50:46 -0900

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Dear Members,

Here are my comments on the draft 06-08 State Transportation Improvement Plan. Some of you may want to go to the STIP Website and send in your own comments, mirroring these and/or adding your own local concerns. I will not send this until tomorrow should anyone have comments.

*Patrick Reinhart*

December 30, 2005

Mike Barton, Commissioner

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

3132 Channel Drive

Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Commissioner Barton,

I have reviewed the draft 06-08 STIP and have the following comments, questions and concerns.

First and foremost we applaud the emphasis place on public transit through the new federal legislation—SAFETEA-LU. However, as a coalition of community transportation providers and public transit users we are disappointed in the fact that ***the State of Alaska does not support public transportation as demonstrated by how little state funds are allocated to augment federal funds for transit.***

The State must not understand that not all Alaskans drive cars, nor should they—



seniors, persons with disabilities, youth and low-income workers all need rides from someone else in order to participate fully in their community. In communities where it exists, **public transit is the vital link between jobs and workers.** If the state expects economic development to rise from its investment in our public infrastructure, then we must incorporate elements of public transit or community rides into that vision.

As an example of our lack of investment, in the STIP chart titled **"Federal Transit Program"** the only state match shown is \$2.4 million for the Alaska Marine Highway Program. On the Highway side (page 32), the only other match shown by the state is \$31.6 thousand for the **"Public Transportation Social Service Van Replacement/Sec. 5310 Supplemental Transportation Program"**, which also transfers \$318.4 thousand of federal highway funds to this program. **The total amount of funding for this program is \$200.0 thousand less than last year!** The decrease in allocation of funding for this program is not necessary given the apparent flexibility the state now has with its earmarked funds and the significant increase in overall federal funding the state will garner over the next several years for transportation. The State should **increase the amount of funding going into this program by \$500.0 thousand.**

Second, **our community transportation providers and public transit agencies have all experienced significant operating expense increases this last year.** The price of fuel is a major factor as well as van and bus insurance premiums. Fortunately through SAFETEA-LU we shall experience a significant increase in funding for the 5311 Rural Transit funds, which may provide some needed relief to our providers outside of Anchorage and Fairbanks but do little to relieve the urban public transit programs. Even still, the State can assist all providers through a revision of the STIP that include the following additions:

- ✦ **Provide a State Match Program to Augment Local Matches--**The required local match required of all the formula programs may be too steep for our providers to even access all the available federal funding. Therefore we request the **State put in \$1.76 million in State GF to make available as a match to the local match required under the 5310, 5311, 5316 and 5317 programs,** essentially making it a shared 50/50 local and state match requirement. This would give our providers the leverage to necessary to get local support to expand hours of services, routes and frequency of trips to meet the ever increasing demand by the public.
- ✦ **Provide a Fuel Supplemental Grant Program for Transit Providers--** Fuel prices that have more than doubled have hit our providers hard this year and there is no relief in site. We suggest the state start a fuel supplemental grant program utilizing, if possible, federal highway funds. If federal funds cannot be used, then state GF. One reasonable formula to consider is that public transportation systems, which include city and non-profit run systems, be allowed to apply for relief in the amount of 25% of their total fuel costs in a year, but no more than \$250,000. **The total estimated cost for such a program in one year would be less than \$1 million.**

Thank you for your careful consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

*Patrick Reinhart*

Executive Director  
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cc. AMC Members

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